

Governor signs preschool bill: First step in expanding preschool opportunity for CA children

9/07/06

To: State Desk

Contact: Susanna Cooper, 916-730-2053, scooper@preschoolcalifornia.org, or Lisa Rothbard, 510-271-0075 x303, lrothbard@preschoolcalifornia.org, both of Preschool California

OAKLAND, Calif., Sept. 7/U.S. Newswire/ -- Maryann O'Sullivan, founder and CEO of Preschool California, issued the following statement in response to the governor's signature on AB 172, a bill that invests \$50 million to expand preschool programs in neighborhoods surrounding low-performing schools:

"We appreciate Governor Schwarzenegger's timely leadership in assuring that the state budget includes some resources to get us started in bringing quality programs to the California kids and schools that need it most.

Creating quality preschool programs is the single most important thing California can do now to assure that our most at-risk kids arrive for school on an even playing field, ready and able to do their best.

We know that kids who get good preschool do much better—because it lays the foundation for them to read and do their best when they get to elementary school.

But the quality of the programs will make the difference in whether we will achieve results for these kids. Looking ahead, we will work with the governor and Legislature to make sure that the preschool programs being provided to children are quality programs that will achieve the outcomes for kids that we all want to see."

AB 172 (Wilma Chan, D-Oakland) will increase preschool enrollment in programs located in the attendance areas of elementary schools that score in the bottom three deciles of the Academic Performance Index. It will also fund an important new family literacy component designed to help parents help their children succeed in preschool and beyond. In addition to the \$50 million in preschool program expansion, \$50 million dollars in one-time funds for preschool facilities was included in the final budget for fiscal year 2006-2007.

Preschool California is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization working to expand quality preschool opportunities. <http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org>.